

# Salmon Migration Obstacle Course

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 [scienceworld.ca/resource/salmon-migration-obstacle-course/](http://scienceworld.ca/resource/salmon-migration-obstacle-course/)

## All Resources

In this game, students will act out the salmon life cycle from fry to spawners. They have to survive in the wild!

Salmon start their lives as eggs, hidden in gravel at the bottom of fast flowing water. They grow up in this spawning ground area as alevin (eating their egg sac) and fry (eating insects.) Seasonally, they are triggered to move beyond their spawning ground. At the stage of smolts, their bodies undergo a large physiological transformation, allowing them to move through their creek, through the river systems, and finally reaching the estuaries that lead them to the ocean. They live in the ocean for the majority of their lives where they develop into adult salmon. Finally, when the time is right, their bodies undergo another large physiological transformation allowing them to travel from the saltwater ocean to the freshwater creek where they were born. They will lay their eggs and milt back in the exact same spot where they grew up for the beginning of their life.

Their migration follows a great distance, amazing abilities to find their home, and incredible amounts of threats along the way. Humans play a large role in the threats to salmon. Most of the salmon die along the way and do not make it back to spawn, but those that make it back lay thousands of eggs to continue the cycle of life for another generation.

This obstacle course is not very easy to migrate through and is therefore representative of an actual salmon migration course in which most of the salmon die along the way, while only a couple make it back to spawn. This game has been adapted from a [Salmonids in the Classroom](#) activity.

## **Objectives**

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Identify each stage of the salmon life cycle.

## **Materials**

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- open area to run in
- long skipping rope
- predator costumes or labels
- blue ribbon or cones to designate spawning grounds and ocean
- mat or other flat object

- 1 flag

## Key Questions

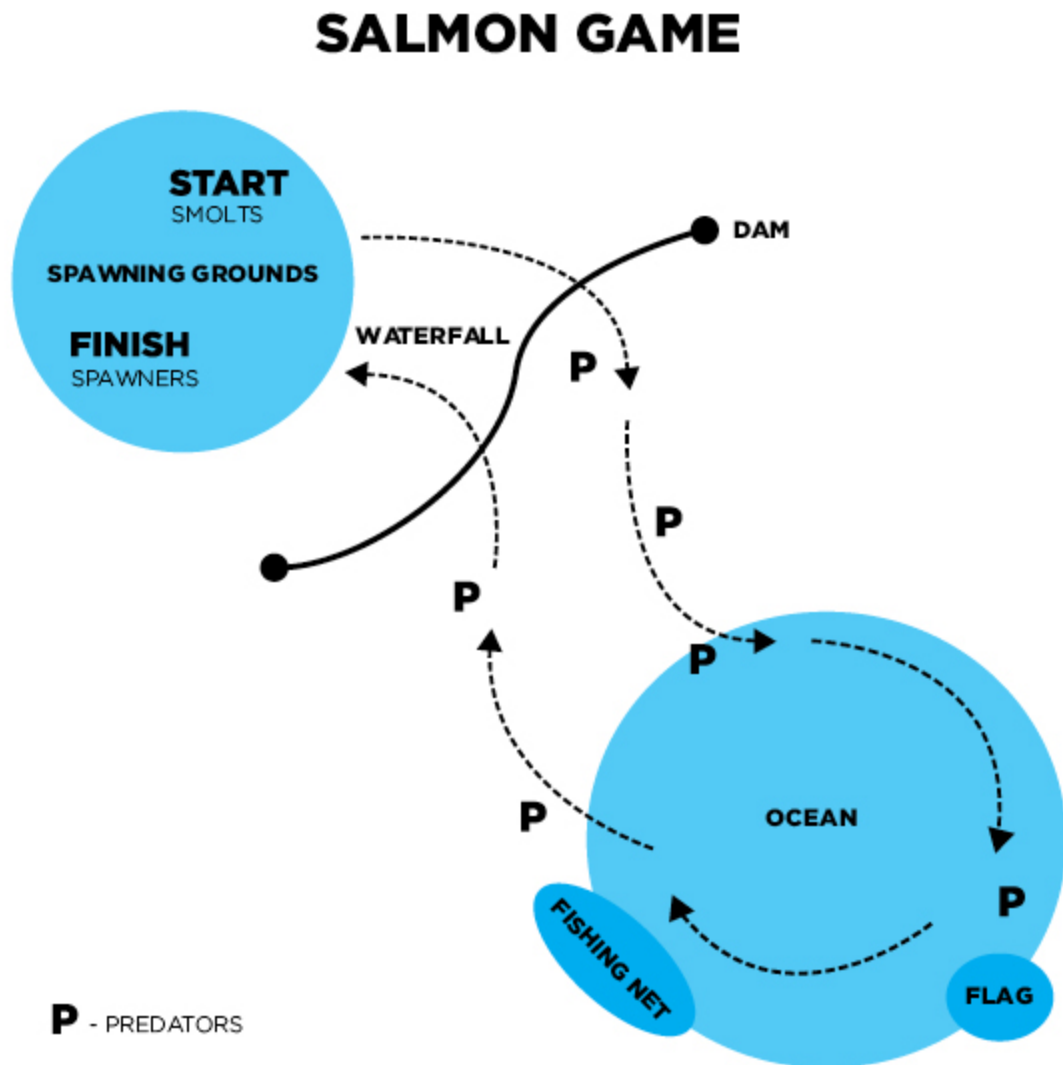
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## What To Do

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### Set up

1. Designate a game area. An outdoor area is recommended.



2. Mark off with blue ribbon the spawning grounds and the ocean areas at opposite ends of the area.
3. The river is the play area between spawning grounds and ocean.
4. Set up the “threats”

- Waterfall: A mat or other flat object that fry must jump over near the spawning grounds.
  - Dam turbine: 2 students turn the skipping rope near the spawning grounds after the waterfall.
  - Predators: Students dressed or labelled as mink, otters, bigger fish, eagles and bears scattered throughout the play area.
    - 4-6 River predators have to stay on the sides of the river.
    - 2 Ocean predators can run throughout the ocean.
  - Fishers: 2-6 students hold hands to form a trawl net near the ocean.
5. Briefly explain the salmon life cycle.
6. The rest of the class are the salmon smolts.

## **Game**

1. Starting at the spawning area, have the salmon smolts run towards the ocean. Along the way, they should jump over waterfall, jump through the turbine and dodge the predators and the fishers.
2. Once they reach the ocean, they should touch the far end of the area where the flag is placed and then run back home, past the predators, dam turbine and jump over the waterfall.
3. Students who are touched by the turbine rope, caught by predators and fishers or those who can't leap the waterfall are "dead." Those who make it back to the spawning grounds, spawn and contribute to the next generation.

## **Extensions**

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